



In other news

February 1, 2018

Apply for financing from the Venture Acceleration Fund

Eligible early-stage technology and manufacturing companies based in Northern New Mexico are encouraged to apply for funding from this year's Venture Acceleration Fund (VAF) awards. Supported by Los Alamos National Laboratory and Lab operator Los Alamos National Security, LLC, VAF is a funding source useful for technology and manufacturing companies that are not ready for equity investment, but unable to get bank financing. The funding does not require companies to give up any shares in their business.

"The VAF has been a key source of seed financing for early-stage technology and manufacturing startups in the region, and has helped create and retain more than 693 jobs since the program launched in 2006," says Val Alonzo, director of the Regional Development Corporation, the organization that administers the fund. The 2018 call for proposals opens on February 9, and applications are due at close of business on March 12. To help businesses learn more about the application process, there is a [VAF information session](#) on February 6 from 5:30 - 6:30 pm at ProjectY in Los Alamos.

The Naturaleza team from Turquoise Trail Charter Elementary School in Santa Fe claimed fourth place in the overall competition.

Students design the city of the future

The 2017-2018 Future City event on January 13 saw 35 middle-school teams from across New Mexico compete at the UNM School of Architecture and Engineering. The competition encourages students to imagine, research, design, and build cities of the future that address a particular sustainability issue. This year's theme was 'the age-friendly city', with teams devising solutions that allow their future city's senior citizens to be as active and independent as possible.

"It's a great way to for students to develop teamwork as well as research, writing and presentation skills, and see that engineering is about making the world a better place," says Janelle Vigil-Maestas of the Community Partnerships Office at Los Alamos National Laboratory. The Lab has been a co-sponsor of the event for the last five years.

Northern New Mexico was particularly well-represented, with 16 teams from seven schools taking part. Participants completed five deliverables: a virtual city design (using

the SimCity computer program), an essay, a tabletop scale model made from recycled materials, a project plan, and a presentation to judges.

One of the 300 New Mexico nonprofits supported by the Los Alamos National Laboratory Employee Giving Campaign is Somos Amigos, an Española-based organization that carries out home repairs for elderly and low-income homeowners in Northern New Mexico to ensure their homes are safe and healthy.

Laboratory Giving Campaign breaks records

In a record-setting 2018 annual Employee Giving Campaign, workers at Los Alamos National Laboratory raised \$3m to benefit mostly New Mexico nonprofit organizations. 1,716 Laboratory employees—more than ever before—pledged more money than ever before; \$2.6 million of this year's contributions will stay in New Mexico and benefit organizations that improve the quality of life in the state. Los Alamos National Security, LLC, the company that manages and operates the Laboratory, has committed to matching a portion of employee giving.

“The support and contributions from the Laboratory have helped change the lives of many teens throughout northern New Mexico and without that support, we could not provide the safe haven that our young people need,” said Ben Sandoval, of the Española Teen Center, one of the local organizations benefitting from the Giving Campaign.

Students receive scholarships to pursue new career opportunities

The Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL) Foundation has awarded Regional College/Returning Student (RCRS) Scholarships to 16 Northern New Mexico students. These \$1000 awards from the [Los Alamos Employees' Scholarship Fund](#) (LAESF) help local, nontraditional students return to formal education to expand job opportunities or pursue new careers with a certification or two-year degree from an accredited college or university in Northern New Mexico.

Since 2011, RCRS scholarships totaling \$189,000 have supported 189 adult students from the region.

Lab scientist featured in Women of STEM calendar

Laboratory physicist Hanna Makaruk has been chosen as one of the women to feature in the 2019 New Mexico Women of STEM calendar. The calendar, sponsored by the Supercomputing Challenge, is sent to middle and high school math and science teachers throughout the state and showcases successful women in STEM-related fields in an effort to create student interest.

“As a scientist I am solving puzzles which nobody has solved yet. What could be more exciting?” Makaruk says. The calendar is also available for purchase through the [Supercomputing Challenge website](#)

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